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Agenda item 69 (a)
**Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations**

**Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, South Africa,* Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: draft resolution**

## International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development

*The General Assembly*,

*Reaffirming* its resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, the annex to which contains the guiding principles for the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system, as well as all its resolutions on international cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development, and recalling the resolutions of the humanitarian segments of the substantive sessions of the Economic and Social Council,

*Recognizing* the importance of the principles of neutrality, humanity, impartiality and independence for the provision of humanitarian assistance,

*Reiterating* that independence means the autonomy of humanitarian objectives as distinct from the political, economic, military or other objectives that may be pursued by any actor with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented,

*Welcoming* the Hyogo Declaration,[1] the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters[2] and the common statement of the special session on the Indian Ocean disaster: risk

* On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China.

[1] A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 1.

[2] Ibid., resolution 2.

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reduction for a safer future,[3] as adopted by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005,

*Emphasizing* that the affected State has the primary responsibility in the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory and in the facilitation of the work of humanitarian organizations in mitigating the consequences of natural disasters,

*Emphasizing also* the responsibility of all States to undertake disaster preparedness, response and mitigation efforts in order to minimize the impact of natural disasters, while recognizing the importance of international cooperation in support of the efforts of affected countries which may have limited capacities in this regard,

*Noting* the critical role played by local resources, and by existing in-country capacities, in natural disaster management and risk reduction, disaster response, rehabilitation and development,

*Recognizing* the importance of international cooperation in support of the efforts of the affected States in dealing with natural disasters in all their phases, and of strengthening the response capacity of countries affected by disaster,

*Noting with appreciation* the important role played by Member States, including developing countries, that have granted necessary and continued generous assistance to countries and peoples stricken by natural disasters,

*Recognizing* the significant role played by national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, as part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in disaster preparedness and risk reduction, disaster response, rehabilitation and development,

*Emphasizing* the importance of addressing vulnerability and integrating risk reduction into all phases of natural disaster management, post-natural disaster recovery and development planning,

*Welcoming* the work carried out by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the setting up of regional tsunami early warning systems, in the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean and the north-east Atlantic, and noting with appreciation the convening of the Third International Conference on Early Warning, held in Bonn, Germany, in March 2006,

*Recognizing* that efforts to achieve economic growth, sustainable development and internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, can be adversely affected by natural disasters, and noting the positive contribution that those efforts can make in strengthening the resilience of populations to such disasters,

*Emphasizing*, in this context, the important role of development organizations in supporting national efforts to mitigate the consequences of natural disasters,

1. *Takes note* of the reports of the Secretary-General entitled "International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief

[3] A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, annex II.

to development";[4] "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations";[5] "Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction, recovery and prevention in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster";[6] and "Central Emergency Response Fund";[7]

2. *Expresses its deep concern* at the number and scale of natural disasters and their increasing impact, resulting in massive losses of life and property worldwide, in particular in vulnerable societies lacking adequate capacity to mitigate effectively the long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences of natural disasters;

3. *Calls upon* States to fully implement the Hyogo Declaration[1] and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters,[2] in particular those commitments related to assistance for developing countries that are prone to natural disasters and for disaster-stricken States in the transition phase towards sustainable physical, social and economic recovery, for risk-reduction activities in post-disaster recovery and for rehabilitation processes;

4. *Calls upon* all States to adopt, where required, and to continue to implement effectively, necessary legislative and other appropriate measures to mitigate the effects of natural disasters and integrate disaster risk reduction strategies into development planning, and in this regard requests the international community to continue to assist developing countries as well as countries with economies in transition;

5. *Welcomes* the effective cooperation among the affected States, relevant bodies of the United Nations system, donor countries, regional and international financial institutions and other relevant organizations, such as the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and civil society, in the coordination and delivery of emergency relief, and stresses the need to continue such cooperation and delivery throughout relief operations and medium and long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, in a manner that reduces vulnerability to future natural hazards;

6. *Reiterates* the commitment to support the efforts of countries, in particular developing countries, to strengthen their capacities at all levels in order to prepare for and respond rapidly to natural disasters and mitigate their impact;

7. *Stresses* that, to increase further the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance, particular international cooperation efforts should be undertaken to enhance and broaden further the utilization of national and local capacities and, where appropriate, of regional and subregional capacities of developing countries for disaster preparedness and response, which may be made available in closer proximity to the site of a disaster, and more efficiently and at lower cost;

8. *Also stresses*, in this context, the importance of strengthening international cooperation, particularly through the effective use of multilateral mechanisms, in the timely provision of humanitarian assistance through all phases

[4] A/61/314.
[5] A/61/85-E/2006/81.
[6] A/61/87-E/2006/77.
[7] A/61/85/Add.1-E/2006/81/Add.1.

of a disaster, from relief and mitigation to development, including the provision of adequate resources;

9. *Welcomes* the role of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat as the focal point within the overall United Nations system for the promotion and coordination of disaster response among United Nations humanitarian organizations and other humanitarian partners;

10. *Also welcomes*, so as to increase further the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance, the incorporation of experts from developing countries that are prone to natural disasters into the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination system and the work of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group in assisting such countries in strengthening urban search and rescue capacities and establishing mechanisms for improving their coordination of national and international response in the field, and recalls in this regard its resolution 57/150 of 16 December 2002 entitled "Strengthening the effectiveness and coordination of international urban search and rescue assistance";

11. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in consultation with States and relevant organizations, to continue to explore ways to strengthen the rapid response capacities of the international community to provide immediate humanitarian relief, building on existing arrangements and ongoing initiatives;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to develop more systematic links with Member States offering military assets for natural disaster response in order to identify the availability of such assets;

13. *Notes* that the Central Register of Disaster Management Capacities, including the Directory of Advanced Technologies for Disaster Response, has the potential to support planning preparedness and response activities, and requests the Secretary-General to propose options to enhance its relevance;

14. *Encourages* donors to consider the importance of ensuring that assistance in the case of higher-profile natural disasters does not come at the expense of those natural disasters that may be relatively lower-profile, bearing in mind that the allocation of resources should be driven by needs;

15. *Recognizes* that information and telecommunication technology can play an important role in disaster response, encourages Member States to develop emergency response telecommunication capacities, and encourages the international community to assist the efforts of developing countries in this area, where needed;

16. *Encourages* States that have not acceded to or ratified the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations, which entered into force on 8 January 2005,[8] to consider doing so;

17. *Encourages* the further use of space-based and ground-based remote sensing technologies, as well as the sharing of geographical data, for the prevention, mitigation and management of natural disasters, where appropriate;

18. *Encourages* Member States, relevant United Nations organizations and international financial institutions to enhance the global capacity for sustainable

[8] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2296, No. 40906.

post-disaster recovery in areas such as coordination with traditional and non-traditional partners, identification and dissemination of lessons learned, development of common tools and mechanisms for recovery needs assessment, strategy development and programming, and incorporation of risk reduction into all recovery processes, and welcomes the ongoing efforts to this end;

19. *Requests* the United Nations system to improve its coordination of disaster recovery efforts, from relief to development, inter alia, by strengthening institutional, coordination and strategic planning efforts in disaster recovery, in support of national authorities;

20. *Stresses* the importance of rapid access to funds to ensure a more predictable and timely United Nations response to humanitarian emergencies, and welcomes in this regard the establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund in its resolution 60/124;

21. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to improve the international response to natural disasters and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session.